

REMARKS

Favorable reconsideration of this application, as presently amended and in light of the following discussion, is respectfully requested.

Claims 1 and 4-19 are currently pending. Claim 3 has been canceled without prejudice; Claim 19 has been added; and Claims 1, 12, 17, and 18 have been amended by the present amendment. The changes to the claims are supported by the originally filed specification and do not add new matter.

In the outstanding Office Action, Claims 1 and 3-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 7,209,180 to Takagi et al. (hereinafter “the ‘180 patent”); in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,394,690 to Kobayashi (hereinafter “the ‘690 patent”); and Claim 18 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over the ‘180 and ‘690 patents, further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,742,334 to Yagura et al. (hereinafter “the ‘334 patent”).

Amended Claim 1 is directed to an image processor for processing a video signal, comprising: (1) aspect ratio information acquisition means for acquiring aspect ratio information about an original video signal by detecting a video identification signal that has been superimposed on the original video signal; (2) aspect ratio conversion means for carrying out a process of aspect ratio conversion on the original video signal based on the acquired aspect ratio information to generate a processed video signal representing an image of the original video signal having a roundness of 1, wherein the aspect ratio conversion means has an operation mode in which the aspect ratio of the original video signal is changed automatically based on information about the original video signal, and an operation mode in which the aspect ratio of the original video signal is changed using a fixed scaling factor determined without referring to the original video signal; (3) background signal generation means for generating a background video signal serving as a background of the processed

video signal; and (4) video signal combination means for executing a process of combining the processed video signal and the background video signal, both having been subjected to aspect ratio conversion, to generate a synthesized video signal. The changes to Claim 1 are supported by the originally filed specification and do not add new matter.¹

Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of Claim 1 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) is rendered moot by the present amendment to Claim 1. However, since Claim 1 has been amended to incorporate the limitation recited in Claim 3, Applicants will address the rejections set forth in the outstanding Office Action regarding Claim 3.

The ‘180 patent is directed to a video output device that detects an aspect ratio of an input video and adds blanks on both left and right sides of the video to produce a video having an aspect ratio of 16/9 when the detected aspect ratio is 4/3, and adds a blank on both the upper and lower sides of the video to produce a video having an aspect ratio of 4/3, when an aspect ratio of 16/9 for the input video is detected. Further, the ‘180 patent also discloses that the device includes a blank video detecting unit configured to detect whether or not a predetermined range on both left and right sides of the input video is uniform, and to detect whether or not a predetermined range on both upper and lower sides of an input video is uniform. Further, the ‘180 patent discloses that when blanks are detected in a video image signal, the newly added blanks are determined to have a color and brightness to be the same as the color and brightness of the blanks already in the video image.

However, as admitted in the outstanding Office Action, the ‘180 patent fails to disclose “how the aspect ratio is detected, particularly by detecting a video identification signal that has been superimposed on the original video signal.”²

¹ See, e.g., original Claim 3.

² See page 3 of the outstanding Office Action.

Further, Applicants respectfully submit that the ‘180 patent fails to disclose that the aspect ratio conversion means is an operation mode in which the aspect ratio of the original video signal is changed automatically based on information about the original video signal, and an operation mode in which the aspect ratio of the original video signal is changed using a fixed scaling factor determined without referring to the original video signal, as recited in amended Claim 1. In this regard, Applicants note that the Office Action relies on the disclosure in Figure 2 of the ‘180 patent as disclosing this limitation. In particular, the Office Action asserts that in the “no” branch of Step S2, a fixed factor of 1 is used. However, Applicants note that amended Claim 1 states that this operation mode requires a video signal to be **changed** without referring to the original video signal. Applicants respectfully submit that Figure 2 indicates that the input video signal is not changed at all when the no branch is executed. Having the fixed scaling factor to be equal to 1 does not alter the fact that the ‘180 patent discloses that the video signal is not changed, contrary to the requirements of amended Claim 1.

The ‘690 patent is directed to a variable aspect ratio television receiver that can receive a non-standard television signal containing an identification signal superimposed upon the video signal for the first several horizontal scan lines in the vertical scanning period. Further, the ‘690 patent discloses that, upon detection of the signal, the horizontal deflection amplitude of the image reproduction is controlled to accurately reproduce the non-standard television signal. However, Applicants note that the ‘690 patent does not disclose that the input signal is changed in any respect, only that the deflection circuit is altered to accommodate the non-standard signal based on the detected identification.

However, Applicants respectfully submit that the ‘690 patent fails to disclose the two aspect ratio conversion operation modes in recited amended Claim 1. In particular, the ‘690 patent does not disclose an aspect ratio operation mode in which the aspect ratio of the

original video signal is changed using a fixed scaling factor determined without referring to the original video signal. As discussed above, the ‘690 patent does not disclose changing the aspect ratio of the original video signal in any respect. Rather, the ‘690 patent discloses that the original video signal remains unchanged, but that, based on the detected identification, the signal is displayed in a different manner.

Thus, no matter how the teachings of the ‘180 and ‘690 patents are combined, the combination does not teach or suggest the two operation modes recited in amended Claim 1. In particular, the combined teachings of the ‘180 and ‘690 patents fail to disclose an operation mode in which the aspect ratio of the original video signal is changed using a fixed scaling factor determined without referring to the original video signal, as recited in amended Claim 1. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that amended Claim 1 (and all similarly rejected dependent claims) patentably defines over any proper combination of the ‘180 and ‘690 patents.

Independent Claims 12 and 17 recite limitations analogous to the limitations recited in Claim 1. Moreover, Claims 12 and 17 have been amended in a manner analogous to the amendment to Claim 1. Accordingly, for the reasons stated above, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejections of Claims 12 and 17 (and all associated dependent claims) are rendered by moot by the present amendments to Claims 12 and 17.

Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of Claim 18 is rendered moot by the present amendment to Claims 1 and 18. In particular, Applicants note that Claim 18 has been amended to clarify that the two bit code indicates the process of aspect ratio conversion on the original video signal. In this regard, Applicants note that the ‘334 patent is directed to a film image reproducing apparatus for reproducing a film image of each frame of a film. In particular, as shown in Figure 5, the ‘334 patent discloses two bits 88 that are optically encoded on the film as the film is used in a camera. The two bits 88 indicate whether the

corresponding image is of a standard size, high vision size, or panorama size. Thus, the '334 patent indicates an aspect ratio of the corresponding recorded image. However, Applicants respectfully submit that the two bits 88 disclosed by the '334 patent do not indicate the process of aspect ratio conversion on the original video signal, as required by amended Claim 18. The '334 patent does not disclose any aspect ratio conversion of the corresponding image, but only indicates bits that signify the aspect ratio so that the film development can be performed in an appropriate manner. Further, Applicants respectfully submit that the rejection of dependent Claim 18 is rendered moot by the present amendment to Claim 12.

The present amendment also sets forth new Claim 19 for examination on the merits. New Claim 19, which depends from Claim 18, clarifies that the first bit of the two bit code is used to indicate whether the original video signal represents a signal having a 16:9 aspect ratio embedded in a signal having an aspect ratio of 4:3. New Claim 19 is supported by the originally filed specification and does not add new matter.³

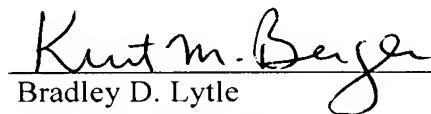
Thus, it is respectfully submitted that independent Claims 1, 12, and 17 (and all associated dependent claims) patentably define over any proper combination of the '180, '690, and '334 patents.

³ See, e.g., page 11 in the specification.

Consequently, in view of the present amendment and in light of the above discussion, the outstanding grounds for rejection are believed to have been overcome. The application as amended herewith is believed to be in condition for formal allowance. An early and favorable action to that effect is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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